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From: Lukingbeal, Eric <ELUKINGBEAL@RC.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2013 5:50 AM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Cc: Lukingbeal, Eric
Subject: 2014-15 Budget

Dear Legislators—

As a long-time Connecticut resident, hiker in state parks, and conservationist, I am surprised and dismayed to see some of the conservation cuts in the Governor's proposed budget. Here are my concerns:

1. Cuts for seasonal workers in state parks. This is not smart management of these resources, because every dollar spent on the parks returns many times that single dollar (one study says \$38) to the state's economy. Deferred maintenance of a revenue-generating entity, which is what the parks really are, makes no sense. The "savings" are illusory, and will end up costing us more in the long run.
2. Cuts to durational foresters. The work these folks do more than pays for their salaries. An estimated \$10 Million over 10 years will be lost. Perhaps more important, the forests themselves will be neglected.
3. Failure to replace full-time foresters. Each one generates at least \$90,000 for the state's general fund, so they earn more than they cost. The legislature should be authorizing more funding. Allowing continued attrition is the wrong path. I've known several of these foresters and I am familiar with the services they provide to the public. They are a bargain, and the quiet, steady work they do is important. Let's have more, not less.
4. Keep CEQ as an independent agency. Consolidation with the Office of Governmental Accountability will reduce its independence and effectiveness.

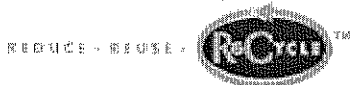
Thanks for listening.

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